



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Notice of Permit Applications Received Under the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978

AGENCY: National Science Foundation.

ACTION: Notice of permit applications received.

SUMMARY: The National Science Foundation (NSF) is required to publish a notice of permit applications received to conduct activities regulated under the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978. NSF has published regulations under the Antarctic Conservation Act in the Code of Federal Regulations. This is the required notice of permit applications received.

DATES: Interested parties are invited to submit written data, comments, or views with respect to this permit application by **[INSERT 30 DAYS FROM DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

This application may be inspected by interested parties at the Permit Office, address below.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to Permit Office, Office of Polar Programs, National Science Foundation, 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22314.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nature McGinn, ACA Permit Officer, at the above address, 703-292-8030, or ACApemits@nsf.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Science Foundation, as directed by the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-541, 45 CFR 670), as amended by the Antarctic Science, Tourism and Conservation Act of 1996, has developed regulations for the establishment of a permit system for various activities in Antarctica and designation of certain animals and certain geographic areas a requiring special protection. The regulations establish such a permit system to designate Antarctic Specially Protected Areas.

APPLICATION DETAILS:

1. Applicant Permit Application: 2020-013
Nicholas Teets, Department of Entomology, University of Kentucky, S-225 Agricultural Science Center, North, Lexington, KY 40546.

Activity for Which Permit is Requested

Enter Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA). The applicant proposes to collect midges (*Belgica antarctica*) from sites along the Antarctic Peninsula for physiology and genetic studies. Sample collections would require access to several ASPAs (108, 126, & 134) and sites within ASMA 7, Southwest Anvers Island and Palmer Basin. Collection of the midges would have minimal to no ecological impacts. Any rocks disturbed would be returned to their original location and position. Very little, if any, plant material would be removed and it would typically be dead or decaying. The local abundances of midges are very high, so the sample collections are expected to have very minimal impact on local populations. The applicant would also collect a small amount of algae (*Prasiola crispa*) to serve as a food source for midges in the laboratory.

Location

Antarctic Peninsula region; ASMA 7, Southwest Anvers Island and Palmer Basin; ASPA 108, Green Island, Berthelot Islands; ASPA 126, Byers Peninsula, Livingston Island, South Shetland Islands; ASPA 134 Cierva Point and offshore islands, Danco Coast, Antarctic Peninsula.

Dates of Permitted Activities

January 1, 2020 – July 1, 2022.

2. Applicant

Permit Application: 2020-021

Daniel P. Zitterbart, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, 266 Woods Hole Road, Woods Hole, MA 02543-1050.

Activity for Which Permit is Requested

Take. The permit applicant proposes to place short-term deployment tags on humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) for the purposes of studying their foraging ecology. The applicant would deploy digital acoustic recording tags (DTAGs) onto humpback whales to record the three-dimensional movement of the animals, and the presence of feeding lunges. DTAGs contain a 3-axis accelerometer and magnetometer that record the pitch, yaw, and heading of the whale at a high

sampling rate (> 50 Hz), as well as a pressure sensor that records the depth of the animal. A FastLoc® (Wildtrack Telemetry Systems Ltd) GPS tag will also be attached to the DTAG, allowing the position of the whale to be recorded throughout the deployment. To deploy the tag, a zodiac will be used to approach the whale, with the tag lowered onto the back of the whale using a carbon-fiber pole. Effort will be made to tag animals that are determined to be in transit or resting, and not currently feeding. The tags would be released from the whales after several hours and would be retrieved by the researchers. The applicant proposes to tag up to five adult or sub-adult humpback whales during the permit period (no calves would be tagged). Up to 70 additional whales, all ages, would potentially be approached and disturbed during the tagging efforts. The applicant and agents would also conduct water and oceanographic sampling, as well as deploy an echosounder and hydrophone, in order to study the availability of prey and oceanographic conditions during whale foraging. The study would be conducted during an expedition aboard a tour vessel operated by Polar Latitudes, Inc.

Location

West Antarctic Peninsula region.

Dates of Permitted Activities

February 27 – March 31, 2020.

Erika N. Davis,

Program Specialist,

Office of Polar Programs.

[FR Doc. 2019-26084 Filed: 12/2/2019 8:45 am; Publication Date: 12/3/2019]